



Piedmont Health District

Serving the counties of Amelia, Buckingham,
Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway, and Prince Edward

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Summer 2000

From the Desk of... Dr. David Goodfriend Health Director



This edition of the Piedmont Health Newsletter represents our first theme issue: **"Summer Safety"**.

Summer is a time for family get togethers. It is a time when school is out, the sun is warm, and the water is cool.

It is also the time when mosquitoes thrive, people die in heat waves, children drown, and families get sick from contaminated food.

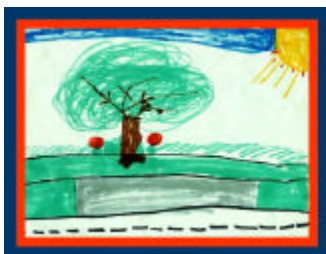
The typical adult loses about 2 quarts of water a day. **In hot weather, a person can lose 2-3 quarts of sweat in just one hour.**

I hope these articles help you enjoy all the best that summer has to offer while keeping you and your family safe.

Additionally, in honor of its worldwide recognition each August, I have added an article that highlights all the advantages of breastfeeding your baby.

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by Grant McQuestion

Controlling Mosquitoes Around the Home

Mosquitoes can be a major nuisance in the summer. Not only do the bites itch, but mosquitoes can carry diseases that cause infections of the brain, like West Nile Virus and St. Louis Encephalitis.



A female mosquito lays up to 200 eggs at a time in stagnant water. In about 10 days, these eggs develop into adult mosquitoes that live and feed on our blood for up to 2 weeks.

Mosquitoes don't fly far from where they were laid, so if you cut out their breeding grounds you will significantly reduce your mosquito problems.

Tips to eliminate mosquito breeding sites:

- Either get rid of old outdoor tires or drill drainage holes in them.
- Clean roof gutters and down-spout screens regularly.
- Turn over wading pools, garbage can lids, and wheelbarrows.
- Adjust tarps to eliminate standing water.
- Re-grade drainage areas and clean out ditches.
- Throw out old cans, bottles, and other containers that can fill with water.

Tips to prevent getting stung by mosquitoes:

- Wear insect repellant when outdoors.
- Wear long sleeve shirts and pants.
- Stay inside at dawn and at dusk through early evening.
- Make sure your window screens are in place and in good condition.

Preventing Foodborne Infections

There are over 250 human diseases carried by food, causing over 75 million illnesses and 5,000 deaths each year in the United States.

Foodborne infections can be caused by bacteria (such as Salmonella, E. coli, or Staph.), viruses, parasites, and chemicals. **Eggs, chicken ground meats, raw shellfish, and unwashed vegetables and fruits are foods most likely to be contaminated.**



Although we are all at risk of getting sick, bottle fed babies, the elderly, pregnant women, and those who can't fight off infections are most likely to die from foodborne illnesses.

Symptoms usually include nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and diarrhea. It is important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration if you do get sick. Most people start feeling better after a couple of days.

You should see a doctor if you have:

- ♥ High fever (over 101.5°F).
- ♥ Blood in your stools.
- ♥ Vomiting to the point that you can't keep any water down, or
- ♥ Diarrhea lasting more than 3 days.

The health department tracks these infections to make sure there are no outbreaks in our community. We also inspect restaurants, milk processing plants, and food vendors at festival events, daycare centers, and nursing homes to make sure their food is safe for you to eat.

What you can do to prevent getting sick from food at home:

- ♥ Wash your fruits and vegetables well.
- ♥ Refrigerate leftovers promptly.
- ♥ Cook meat, poultry and eggs thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 160°F.
- ♥ Don't cross-contaminate foods. Wash your hands, utensils, plates, counter tops, and cutting boards after each time they come in contact with raw meat or poultry.



Keeping Cool- How to Avoid Heat Illnesses

Heat illnesses include a group of medical conditions caused by the loss of water and body salts when we work or play in the heat.

Heat illnesses include:

Heat Cramps: These muscle cramps will usually go away in time after resting in a cool place, drinking water or sports drinks (such as Gatorade), and stretching the cramped muscle.

Heat Syncope (Fainting): It is important to lie down in a cool place and drink water until better.

Heat Exhaustion: Heavy sweating, fatigue, weakness, and fast pulse are common. The best treatment is to lay down in a cool place, drink fluids, and see a doctor if not better in 30 minutes.

Heat Stroke: The skin becomes hot, dry, and flushed, with a fast pulse, fast breathing and fever. This is a medical emergency because convulsions, unconsciousness, and death may follow.

All of us are at risk of a dangerous reaction to the heat. People especially at high risk include those who are:

- Very young or very old.
- With heart or lung disease.
- Living alone and without air conditioning.
- Drinking alcohol.
- With previous heatstroke.
- Working in an exceptionally hot environment.
- On certain medications (such as antihistamines or some sleep medicines).

Steps we can all take to prevent heat illnesses:

- Take 10–14 days to adjust to working or exercising in high temperatures.
- Spend time in air-conditioned places.
- Drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids. It is important to drink water all day to avoid dehydration ... don't wait until you are thirsty. An early sign of dehydration is dark or cloudy urine.
- Exercise during the cooler parts of the day.
- Fans may increase comfort but won't protect you against heat stroke when temperatures reach 90°F and humidity exceeds 35%.

Keeping Safe in the Water – In the Home and Outdoors

On July 6, 2000 a 17-year-old Henrico County boy drowned in his apartment's swimming pool.

Injuries are the number one cause of death for children age 1-14 years. After car crashes, drowning is the most common cause of death from unintended injuries.

Over 100 Virginians die each year from drowning, with our children at highest risk. Many more children survive with permanent brain damage.

Infants are most likely to drown at home in bathtubs, buckets and toilets.



Older children are more likely to drown outdoors in swimming pools, rivers, and lakes.

Almost half of all teenagers who drown were drinking alcohol at the time.

There are easy steps we can all take to keep our children safe while they cool off this summer:

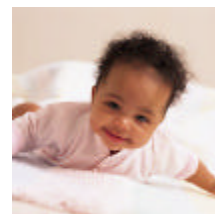
- ♥ Children should always be watched while in or near the water, whether it is a swimming pool, lake, or a bathtub.
- ♥ Bathtubs and buckets should be emptied as soon as bathing and chores are done.
- ♥ Never chew gum or eat while in the water—it can cause choking.
- ♥ Make sure you and your children can swim well.
- ♥ Learn CPR. Check in your local paper or contact the American Heart Association (877-AHA-4CPR) or the American Red Cross (804-780-2250) to find a course near you.
- ♥ If your child swims in a pool, make sure it is not accessible without an adult present. (Is there a gate or fence around the pool?)

Breastfeeding Makes A World of Difference For Infants, Mothers and Employers!

The longer a mother breastfeeds, the more benefits there are for everybody. Whether nursed directly or pumped and stored to be given later, breast milk can make a world of difference for everybody.

Breastfeeding is good for the baby. Breastfed babies are:

- ♥ Half as likely to be sick and 10 times less likely to be admitted to the hospital during their first year of life.
- ♥ Less likely to have ear infections and allergies.
- ♥ One third less likely to die of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).
- ♥ More likely to have better brain development and intelligence.



Breastfeeding is good for the mother:

- ♥ Mothers who breastfeed are less likely to get breast cancer, ovarian cancer, or osteoporosis.
- ♥ Breastfeeding is convenient and breast milk is easier for the baby to digest.

Breastfeeding is good for the employer:

- ♥ Breastfeeding reduces the amount of time new mothers have to miss work to care for sick babies. **Employers can help encourage breastfeeding by providing a private place where mothers can pump breast milk.** If the worksite does not have a refrigerator to store the breast milk, the mother can store the milk in a small cooler until she returns home.

The benefits of breastfeeding are many, but unfortunately only about half of new mothers choose to breastfeed.

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Preventing Skin Cancer – Common Sense Sun Exposure

Over 600,000 new skin cancers are diagnosed each year. Skin cancers, including melanomas, are by far the most common cancers in the United States.

The same ultraviolet (UV) A and B rays from the sun or from tanning booths that give us that beautiful summer tan are the number one cause of skin cancer. UV rays also cause premature aging of the skin and cataracts.

Although everyone can get skin damage and cancer from sun exposure, fair skinned people who tend to burn are at highest risk.

What you can do to prevent skin cancer:

- ♥ Stay out of the sun as much as possible between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when UV exposure is greatest.
- ♥ Wear sunscreen and lip screens that have an SPF of at least 15 and reapply them frequently.
- ♥ Wear sunglasses.
- ♥ Wear protective clothing—long sleeve shirts, long pants and a hat.



Local Health Department Information

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Cumberland County	(804) 492-4661
Lunenburg County	(804) 696-2346
Nottoway County	(804) 645-7595
Prince Edward County	(804) 392-8187

Please Visit Us on the World Wide Web:

Virginia Department of Health: <http://www.vdh.state.va.us>

Piedmont Health District:

<http://www.vdh.state.va.us/lhd/piedmont.htm>

Breastfeeding (continued from page 3)

World Breastfeeding Week is August 1-7. The theme this year is **"Breastfeeding - Education for Life"**. Please join the health department and promote breastfeeding as the preferred feeding for infants.

If you would like more information about the benefits of breastfeeding or have questions about breastfeeding, please call your local health department or call the Piedmont Health District office at 392-3984.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

